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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY JL DATE 9/30/82
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TAGS: SOPN
SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING JUNE 9, 1981
Q. HAS THE STATE DEPARTMENT FINISHED ITS REPORT TO CONGRESS ON THE POSSIBLE USE OF AMERICAN ARMS IN THE IRAQI RAID?
A. I'M NOT CERTAIN I CAN SAY FLATLY THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS FINISHED ITS REPORT, BUT OUR EXPECTATION IS THAT IT WILL BE COMPLETED AND FOWARDED VERY SHORTLY. I DON'T HAVE ANY RECISE ESTIMATE ON THE TIMING OF THE SUBMISSION OF THE REPORT.
Q. WHAT FORM DOES THAT TAKE? WILL IT JUST BE A LETTER STATING IT FLATLY, OR WILL YOU SUBMIT EVIDENCE ALONG WITH IT.
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OR WHAT?
A. I THINK WHAT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GET HERE FOR YOU IS A PRIMER ON HOW THIS WORKS, NOT ONLY FOR YOU, BUT ALSO FOR US. AND I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY DETAILS ON THE PRECISE FORM THIS IS, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, A FAIRLY COMPLICATED PROCESS, AND I JUST DON'T HAVE ANY DETAILS ON WHAT THE STEPS ARE IN THAT PROCESS, BUT WE CAN CERTAINLY TRY AND GET SOMETHING FOR YOU ON THAT.
Q. YESTERDAY, YOU SAID THERE WAS A POSSIBLE VIOLATION. DO YOU STICK BY THAT?
A. YES. I HAVE NOTHING FURTHER I CAN ADD TO THAT TODAY.
Q. DEAN, WHAT IS THE STATUS OF MR. HABIB'S MISSION AT THIS POINT? IS HE STILL IN PARIS WAITING TO --
A. NO. AMBASSADOR HABIB HAS RETURNED TO BEIRUT, BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FURTHER I CAN GIVE YOU ON HIS ITINERARY.
Q. DEAN, IN REGARD TO H;BIB, CAN YOU TELL US IF HE STAYED ALL THE TIME IN PARIS OR HE HAD SOME OTHER STOPOVER ON HIS WAY TO BEIRUT?
A. NO. TO MY KNOWLEDGE, HE WENT STARIGHT FROM PARIS TO BEIRUT.
Q. WHEN YOU SAID YESTERDAY THAT MAYBE ISRAEL WAS IN POSSIBLE VIOLATION OF AMERICAN LAW IN ATTACKING IRAQ, DID YOU MEAN YOU WERE NOT CERTAIN?
A. YOU SEE, THAT'S WHAT THIS PROCESS IS FOR, TO TRY TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THERE WAS A VIOLATION OF AMERICAN LAW.
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Q. BUT ATTACKING ANOTHER COUNTRY DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A VIOLATION?
A. IT'S A COMPLEX PROCESS, AS YOU KNOW. AND AS I SAY,
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THIS IS WHAT THIS PROCESS IS FOR -- TO TRY TO DETERMINE, WHETHER OR NOT THERE WAS AN ACTUAL VIOLATION. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE HAS TO BE A DETERMINATION MADE BASED UPON THE ACTION TAKEN.
Q. I WOULD TAKE IT THAT IT'S NOT IN QUESTION THAT U.S. PLANES WERE USED. THE PROBLEM IS TO DECIDE WHETHER THEIR USE WAS JUSTIFIABLE SELF DEFENSE OF AGGRESSION.
A. THAT'S ONE OF THE FACTORS THAT HAS TO BE CONSIDERED. IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT AMERICAN PLANES WERE USED, THAT IS CORRECT. IT'S A QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THE USE OF THOSE AIRPLANES VIOLATES THE PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT ON ARMS TO ISRAEL.
Q. PRIME MINISTER SAID HE IS GOING TO PROTEST YOUR CONDEMNATION BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO SEE THE FULL ISRAELI EXPLANATION BEFORE YOU MADE IT. DO YOU HAVE ANY RESPONSE TO THAT?
A. NO COMMENT ON THAT, NO.
Q. IFAN, HOW DOES THE UNITED STATES DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN AN OFFENSIVE AND A DEFENSIVE OPERATION?
A. I WOULD SAY THIS IS ONE OF THE QUESTIONS THAT HAS TO BE GOTTEN INTO BY THE CONGRESS AND BY THE ADMINISTRATION IN THIS PROCESS OF DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT THERE WAS A VIOLATION.
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Q. IFAN, DO YOU HAVE A STATEMENT OR COMMENT ON HOW THE EVENTS OF SUNDAY MIGHT IMPACT ON THE HABIB MISSION?
A. NOTHING I CAN GIVE YOU BEYOND WHAT I SAID YESTERDAY ON THAT SUBJECT. WE OBVIOUSLY HOPE THE MISSION WILL CONTINUE. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE PARTIES AND GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED IN THAT CRISIS SHARE OUR HOPE THAT IT WILL CONTINUE.
Q. IFAN ON THE REVIEW AND THE REPORT, IS THE SOLE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS IN VIOLATION OF U.S. NATIONAL LAW OR INCLUDED IN THAT SCOPE, IS THERE GOING TO BE A DETERMINATION OF WHETHER INTERNATIONAL LAW MAY HAVE BEEN VIOLATED AS WELL?
A. TO MY KNOWLEDGE, IT WILL BE CONFINED TO THE FORMER -- WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS A VIOLATION OF THE APPROPRIATE STATUTE.
Q. WILL THIS REPORT MERELY ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THE LAW WAS VIOLATED OR WILL IT SUGGEST OPTIONS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION PUTTING FORTH TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION THAT IS FOUND IN THE REPORT? IS IT MERELY GOING TO BE FACTUAL? IS IT GOING TO RECOMMEND POLICY?
A. THIS IS WHAT I CAN'T REALLY ANSWER TODAY SINCE THE REPORT IS NOT EVEN COMPLETE YET. I JUST DON'T HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THE NATURE OR FOCUS OF IT.
Q. IFAN, ARE YOU IN A POSITION TODAY TO ADDRESS A QUESTION WHICH CAME UP YESTERDAY -- AND APPARENTLY THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION ON WHETHER IT WAS

FELT THAT IRAQ ACTUALLY WAS GOING TO PRODUCE A NUCLEAR WEAPON OR NOT, THAT QUESTION WHICH SEEMS TO BE CENTRAL TO ISRAEL'S JUSTIFICATION?

A. BERNIE, I'M NOT AWARE OF ANY DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION ON THAT. INSOFAR AS THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS CONCERNED, I WOULD HAVE TO STICK WITH WHAT I SAID ON IT YESTERDAY, AND I HAVE NOTHING FURTHER TO OFFER ON THAT.
Q. ARE YOU CONCERNED AT ALL A OUT JACK KEMP'S STATEMENTS YESTERDAY THAT OUR CONDEMNATION MIGHT HAVE BEEN PREMATURE TO HAVE MADE THAT STATEMENT ON ISRAEL BECAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE ALL THE FACTS?
A. I WAS ASKED A SIMILAR QUESTION ABOUT SOMETHING THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER IS REPORTED TO HAVE SIAD. I HAVE NO COMMENT.
Q. WOULD THE UNITED STATES BE IN FAVOR OF TAKING THIS MATTER TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURTIY COUNCIL?
A. I THINK THAT IS PREMATURE FOR ME TO TRY TO ADDRESS UNTIL WE SEE WHAT DEVELOPS IN THE WAKE OF THIS.
Q. DEAN, DO YOU HAVE A REPORT FROM BAGHDAD ON EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED? HAS THE MISSION THERE, THE INTERESTS SECTION. GIVEN YOU A BLOW-BY-BLOW ACCOUNT OR ANY EYE-WITNESS DESCRIPT
A. THE CHIEF OF OUR INTERESTS SECTION IN BAGHDAD WAS CALLED IN, AND HE DID MEET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER HAMMADI, BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING I CAN GIVE YOU ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THEIR DISCUSSION.
Q. WHAT ABOUT A REPORT OF DAMAGE ON THE GROUND OR HOW THE RAID WAS CONDUCTED OR ANY OTHER PHYSICAL CRITERIA?
A. I DON'T HAVE ANY FURTHER DETAILS FOR YOU ON THE DAMAGE

DONE. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, NOTED THE STATEMENTS BY THE IRAQIS THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO RADIATION LEAK. WE DON'T HAVE ANY INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF THAT STATEMENT BY THE IRAQIS.
Q. DEAN, CAN YOU CONFIRM THE REPORTS THAT YOU ASKED THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND THE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR AGENCY FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE CAPABILITIES OF THAT REACTOR?
A. WE WERE IN TOUCH WITH A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES -- AGENCIES, IF YOU WILL -- IN CONNECTION WITH THIS ATTACK SUBSEQUENT TO THE ATTACK. I DON'T WANT TO SPECIFY ALL THE VARIOUS PARTIES THAT WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH ON THAT.
Q. DOES OUR ASSESSMENT COINCIDE WITH THE ISRAELIS THAT THAT REACTOR WAS "GOING HOT" VERY SHORTLY AND THAT AN ATTACK AFTER IT HAD "GONE HOT" WOULD HAVE IRRADIATED A LOT OF PEOPLE
A. AGAIN, I HAVE TO REFER YOU TO THE STATEMENT I MADE YESTERDAY. I HAVE NOTHING FURTHER ON THAT PARTICULAR POINT.
Q. WAS THERE ANY CONCERN OR WORRY WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION THAT IRAQ IN FACT WAS ON THE VERGE OF PRODUCING SOME SORT

OF NUCLEAR DEVICE?
A. I THINK WHAT I DID SAY YESTERDAY ADDRESSED ITSELF TO THAT CONCERN. WE DID NOTE THAT ALTHOUGH IRAQ IS A PARTY TO THE NON-PROLIFERATION AGREEMENT, AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE ALWAYS CONCERNED WITH THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR CAPABILITY; BUT BEYOND THAT, I'M NOT PREPARED TO GO.
Q. LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING OF A PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTION. THE SECRETARY MADE A TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN EARLY APRIL TRYING TO PERSUADE THE MODERATE AND CONSERVATIVE ARAB STATES THERE THAT THE REAL THREAT TO THEIR SECURITY CAME FROM THE SOVIET UNION, NOT FROM ISRAEL. IS THAT STRATEGY STILL TENABLE IN VIEW OF THIS STRIKE?
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A. WE WOULD CERTAINLY LIKE TO THINK SO. (LAUGHTER)
Q. THE EVIDENCE THAT ARAB COUNTRIES ARE VULNERABLE TO STRIKES BY THE ISRAELI AIR FORCE SUPPLIED WITH THE MOST SOPHISTICATED AMERICAN EQUIPMENT, THAT THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT DO ANYTHING TO RESTRAIN ISRAEL FROM THOSE STRIKES, AND THAT YOU'RE STILL TRYING TO MAINTAIN THAT THE SECURITY THREAT, THE PHYSICAL THREAT COMES FROM RUSSIA. DO YOU PLAN TO TRY TO REVIVE THAT STRATEGY? DO YOU PLAN TO ARGUE THAT THIS IS AN ABERRATION? DO YOU PLAN TO DO ANYTHING TO GIVE SOME CONCRETE EVIDENCE THAT THAT STARTEGY IS A SOUND ONE?
A. WE'RE NOT GOING TO ABANDON WHAT THE SECRETARY CLEARLY STATED WERE THE PURPOSES OF HIS TRIP IN APRIL. CLEARLY, WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION AND THE FACTS AS THEY EXIST, AND THERE IS NO REASON, IN OUR JUDGEMENT, TO TRY TO ABANDON WHAT WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY AS THE POLICY OF THIS ADMINISTRATION.
Q. COULD YOU COMMENT ON A TELEVISION REPORT THAT THE U.S. KNEW TWO, TOW AND A HALF WEEKS AGO THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A RAID ON THIS INSTALLATION?
A. I ADDRESSED THAT YESTERDAY, AND I CAN ONLY REITERATE VERY STRONGLY TODAY THAT THAT IS UNTRUE. WE DID NOT KNOW UNTIL AFTER THE ATTACK.
Q. I MEAN, LET ME ASK A BROAD QUESTION JUST TO SEE IF I CAN GET A RESPONSE. WHAT WILL THE EFFECT OF THIS ATTACK BE ON THIS ADMINISTRATION'S RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL?
A. I THINK THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN. I DON'T KNOW WHAT
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I CAN ADD TO WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW, WHICH IS THAT THE ARMS POLICY IS UNDER REVIEW IN THE SENSE THAT THE REPORT IS GOING UP TO THE CONGRESS. I WOULD NOT WANT TO LEAVE YOU, HOWEVER, WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE UNITED STATES IS BACKING AWAY FROM ITS COMMITMENTS TO ISRAEL.
Q. I WOULD LIKE TO FOLLOW UP ON THE QUESTION THAT WAS
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POSED ABOUT SECRETARY HAIG'S STRATEGY AND WHAT HE SAID WHEN HE WAS IN THE REGION. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT REGARD WHAT OCCURRED AS A SETBACK TO THAT STRATEGY?
A. CLEARLY, IT IS A COMPLICATING FACTOR.
Q. DID THE STATE DEPARTMENT CALL THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TO PROTEST THE ACTION?
A. I CANNOT GET INTO THE DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES WE HAVE HAD WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL OR, FOR THAT MATTER, ANY OTHER COUNTRY INVOLVED.
Q. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD ACTUALLY ATTACKED THIS REACTOR EARLIER DURING THE IRAQI-IRANIAN WAR. WILL THE REPORT TO CONGRESS ADDRESS THAT QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN A PREVIOUS RAID ON IT?
A. I AM AWARE OF THOSE RUMORS. I DO NOT KNOW THAT THERE IS ANY SUBSTANTIATION TO THOSE RUMORS, NOR CAN I SA INCE THE REPORT IS NOT COMPLETED, WHETHER OR NOT THAT ALLEGED ATTACK WILL BE ADDRESSED.
Q. HAS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT--THE PRESIDENT OR THE SECRETARY OF STATE--RECEIVED A FULLER EXPLANATION FROM THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER OF WHAT HAPPENED?

A. WE HAVE BEEN IN COMMUNICATION WITH THE ISRAELIS. AS TO A FULLER EXPLANATION, I DON'T KNOW HOW I CAN CHARACTERIZE THAT, BUT THERE HAS BEEN REGULAR AND FREQUENT COMMUNICATION.
Q. WAS THERE A SPECIFIC WRITTEN COMMUNICATION RECEIVED FROM THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER?
A. I WOULD HAVE TO CHECK THAT TO BE SURE.
Q. HAS THE UNITED STATES RECEIVED OR ASKED FOR EVIDENCE FROM ISRAEL CONCERNING ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IRAQI BOMB?
A. AGAIN, YOU ARE ASKING ME TO TRY TO DESCRIBE OR CHARACTERIZE THE DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES OR DISCUSSIONS WE HAVE WITH ANOTHER COUNTRY, AND THIS I CANNOT DO.
Q. DO YOU CONSIDER THIS ACT AS AN ACT OR TERROR? AND, IF SO, WILL IT BE LABELED AS SUCH?
A. WE HAVE NOT DESCRIBED IT AS AN ACT OF TERROR. WHAT WE HAVE DONE WAS TO CONDEMN THE AIR STRIKE, AND BEYOND THAT I AM NOT PREPARED TO GO.
Q. YOU SAID THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT BACK AWAY FROM ITS COMMITMENTS TO ISRAEL. ARE YOU RULING OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A SUSPENSION OF ARMED SHIPMENTS TO ISRAEL?
A. NO. I WAS NOT TRYING TO PREJUDGE WHAT WOULD BE THE OUTCOME OF THIS PROCESS THAT IS NOW BEGINNING BY "COMMITMENTS TO ISRAEL," I MEAN THE LONG STANDING MORAL,

POLITICAL, MILITARY TIES BETWEEN THIS COUNTRY AND ISRAEL. I WAS NOT TRYING TO SPECIFY ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR.
Q. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THIS RAID, THAT IT WAS GOING TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE IT DID.
A. DID NOT KNOW. NOT "APPARENTLY DID NOT KNOW."
Q. IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT SATISFIED WITH THE U-S. INTELLIGENCE GATHERING IN ISRAEL? SHOULD WE HAVE KNOWN? IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT UNHAPPY THAT WE DID NOT HAVE SOME FOREWARNING?
A. WE DO NOT REGARD THE FACT THAT WE DID NOT KNOW ABOUT IT IN ADVANCE AS A SHORTCOMING OF OUR INTELLIGENCE.
Q. DO YOU SEE ANY CONNECTION OR LINKAGE BETWEEN THE ISRAELI AIR ATTACK AND YOUR PLAN TO SELL THE AWACS TO SAUDI ARABIA?
A. NO.
Q. COULD YOU GIVE US ANYTHING ABOUT THE TIMING, WHEN YOU ARE GOING TO PRESENT THE BILL TO THE CONGRESS?
A. NO, I CANNOT. WE WILL ANNOUNCE THAT AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME.
Q. COULD YOU CONFIRM THE REPORTS THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT PROTESTED THE ISRAELI POSITION IN THE U.S. TO THE SALE OF THE AWACS IN A LETTER GIVEN FRIDAY TO THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR?

A. NO, I CANNOT CONFIRM THAT.
Q. IS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT STILL HOPING FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE SYRIAN MISSILES FROM LEBANON?
A. THAT, AGAIN, IS A QUESTION THAT HAS BEEN A SUBJECT OF AMBASSADOR HABIB'S MISSION TO THE AREA. AS YOU KNOW FROM PREVIOUS STATEMENTS, EITHER BY MYSELF OR BY OTHERS, WE ARE NOT SPECIFYING WHAT WE THINK ARE THE INGREDIENTS OF A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT AND CRISIS IN LEBANON.
Q. THE REPORT THAT IS BEING PREPARED FOR THE CONGRESS, WILL IT ADDRESS OTHER CASES WHERE ISRAEL MAY HAVE USED AMERICAN WEAPONS, OR DOES IT ONLY DEAL WITH THIS ATTACK ON THE NUCLEAR FACILITY?
A. I WAS ASKED THAT QUESTION BEFORE, AND MY RESPONSE WAS, "I DO NOT KNOW SINCE THE REPORT IS STILL IN PREPARATION."
Q. WHEN YOU WERE TALKING BEFORE ABOUT RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND YOU SAID THAT THE ARMS POLICY IS UNDER REVIEW IN THE SENSE THAT THIS REPORT IS NOW BEING PREPARED FOR THE CONGRESS; AS YOU PREPARE THAT REPORT IS THERE CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A SUSPENSION OF AMERICAN ARMS?
A. NO. I DID NOT MEAN TO LEAVE YOU WITH THE IMPRESSION. I WOULD RATHER CORRECT MY STATEMENT THAT "THE ARMS POLICY

IS UNDER REVIEW." I ONLY MEANT TO SUGGEST THAT THERE IS A DETERMINATION THAT WILL BE MADE AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE ACT WAS VIOLATED.
AS YOU KNOW, THERE ARE PROBABLY A NUMBER OF OPTIONS, OR A NUMBER OF POSSIBILITIES, THAT COULD EVOLVE FROM THE

COMPLETION OF THIS REVIEW PROCESS. THAT IS ONE OF THEM. I SUPPOSE A TOTAL SUSPENSION OF ALL ARMS ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL IS ANOTHER, BUT I AM NOT TRYING TO SUGGEST THAT IN ANY WAY THIS IS THE LIKELY OR PROBABLE OUTCOME. WE DO NOT KNOW.
Q. AS YOU SAID YESTERDAY, THAT IS A DETERMINATION THAT COULD BE MADE EITHER BY THE ADMINISTRATION OR THE CONGRESS.
A. YES, THAT IS CORRECT.
Q. IS IT THE ADMINISTRATION'S PLAN AT THIS POINT TO MAKE A DETERMINATION LIKE THAT, OR SIMPLY TO PROVIDE CONGRESS WITH THE FACTS AS BEST THE ADMINISTRATION KNOWS THEM AND HAVE CONGRESS MAKE THAT DETERMINATION?
A. THIS IS WHY I CANNOT CHARACTERIZE THE REPORT. SINCE IT IS NOT YET COMPLETED. I PRESUME WE WILL KNOW VERY SHORTLY WHAT THAT REPORT WILL SAY.
Q. IN THE WAY OF A SUMMARY QUESTION, I GET THE IMPRESSION FROM ALL OF YOUR ANSWERS THAT NOTHING HAS HAPPENED IN THE SENSE THAT YOU HAVE NOT LEARNED ANYTHING IN THE LAST 24 HOURS THAT HAS IN ANY WAY CHANGED YOUR APPRAISAL OF WHAT TOOK PLACE; YOU ARE STILL CONDEMNING IT, YOU STILL FEEL THE WAY YOU DID YESTERDAY?
A. YES. WE STAND BY YESTERDAY'S STATEMENT. NOTHING HAS CHANGED IN ANY RESPECT THAT I AM AWARE OF THAT WOULD CAUSE US TO CHANGE THAT ASSESSMENT. HAIG